



Department of the Navy Northwest Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS

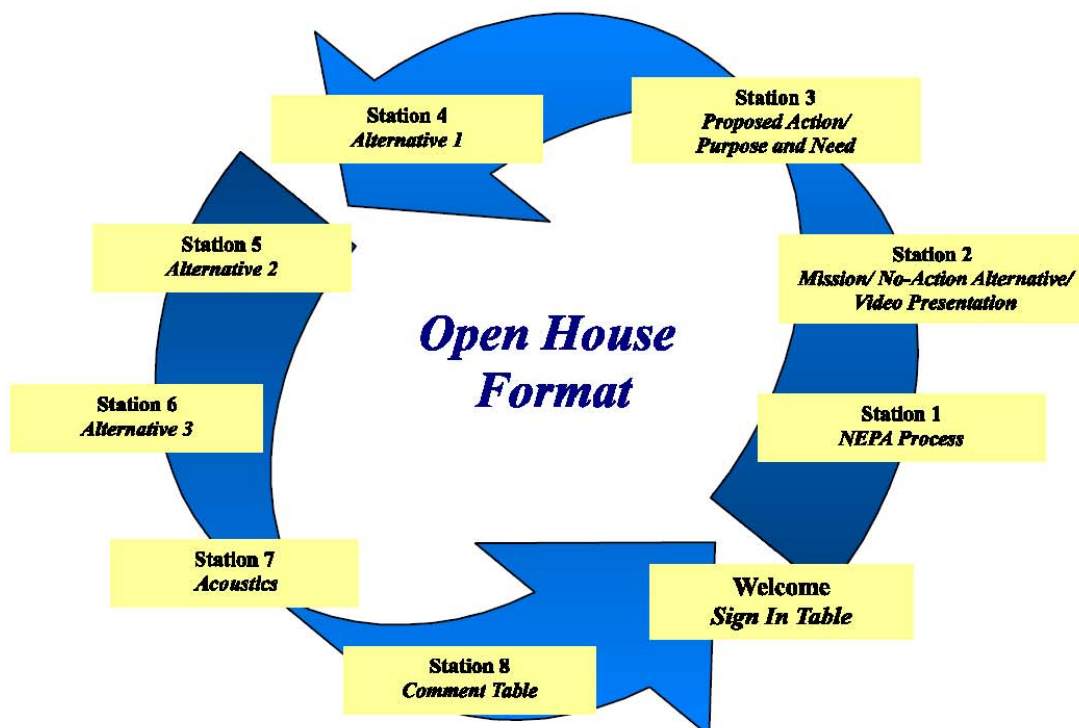


Welcome to the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport's Open House

The Department of the Navy (Navy), Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division, Keyport (NUWC Keyport) proposes to extend existing operations in waters associated with the Northwest Range Complex in Washington State. The proposed action would provide adequate space to support existing and future research, test, and evaluation operations for the evolving unmanned and manned vehicle program needs in multiple marine environments. The Northwest Range Complex is currently composed of: the Keyport Range within Kitsap County, Dabob Bay Range Complex within Kitsap and Jefferson Counties, and Quinault Underwater Tracking Range (QUTR) adjacent to Grays Harbor County. NUWC Keyport is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and action alternatives.

We are here tonight because your community lies within the counties adjacent to existing and proposed NUWC Keyport research, test, and evaluation operations. The purpose of this scoping meeting is to inform you of the proposed action to extend the range, explain the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and to solicit your input on the range extension proposal and alternatives.

Displays are located throughout the Open House, and Navy representatives are here to provide you with information and answer any questions you might have about the proposed action or the NEPA process. A video presentation provides some examples of typical range operations.



Introduction

NUWC Keyport is preparing an EIS/OEIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the extension of the Northwest Range Complex. In accordance with Executive Order 12114, an OEIS is being prepared in conjunction with the EIS to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposed action in waters outside 12 nautical miles from the U.S. coastline (nmi). In this case, the Quinault Underwater Tracking Range, off the Pacific Coast of northwest Washington, is proposed as a part of the Northwest Range Complex extension that falls outside the 12nmi limit.

Background

NUWC Keyport has historically provided facilities for testing of torpedoes and similar systems. These systems are generally tested for short durations and within existing range space. However, the NUWC Keyport test requirements have evolved. This includes being designated the National Unmanned Undersea Test and Evaluation Center for the Navy. These new testing requirements include extended test durations, additional maneuvering space, and multiple types of water conditions.



Other assets required to meet the evolving test requirements include a greater variety of launch and recovery methods and variable environments. Many of the new systems will need to be tested in adjacent waters to NUWC Keyport. Some will need to be tested near active harbors. Maneuverability and buoyancy must also be tested in a variety of water conditions. For example, variations in salinity throughout a water column and natural currents challenge systems for buoyancy and guidance. Currently, these systems are tested in generally homogenous water bodies such as ponds and lakes. Lastly, shore facilities and Fleet personnel need to be co-located with the testing systems to support the various phases of the Navy's testing and evaluation process.



What is the Proposed Action?

NUWC Keyport proposes to extend the Northwest Range Complex operating areas (Keyport Range, Dabob Bay Range Complex, and Quinault Underwater Tracking Range) to provide adequate space to support existing and future research, test, and evaluation operations for the evolving unmanned and manned vehicle program needs in multiple marine environments. Three action alternatives have been identified to implement the proposed action. Each action alternative includes the continuation of existing operations and incorporates the proposed extensions. The No-Action Alternative is defined as no change to existing range operations or boundaries. The table below presents elements of each of these alternatives.

Northwest Range Complex Extension EIS/OEIS				
<i>Project Components</i>	<i>Alternative 1</i>	<i>Alternative 2</i>	<i>Alternative 3</i>	<i>No-Action Alternative</i>
Dabob Range Complex				
Continue Existing Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct New Activities	✓	✓	✓	
Add Shallow Water Analysis	✓		✓	
Extend Hood Canal Military Operating Area North and South	✓			
Keyport Range				
Continue Existing Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct New Activities	✓	✓	✓	
Extend Operating Area	✓	✓	✓	
Quinault Underwater Tracking Range				
Continue Existing Activities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conduct New Activities	✓	✓	✓	
Extend Operating Area	✓	✓	✓	

Purpose and Need of the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide adequate testing space in multiple marine environments for existing and new range operations in the Pacific Northwest at facilities and ranges in the vicinity of NUWC Keyport. The need for the proposed action is to meet both the existing and future operational requirements of NUWC Keyport for test, evaluation, and training services in multiple environments.

An Overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

NEPA is the national charter for promoting balance between man and the human environment and minimizing the impacts of federal actions. This law requires all federal agencies to consider potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives in making decisions. Public involvement is an essential part of the process. With public involvement and environmental analysis, the NEPA process helps the decision-maker arrive at the best possible informed decision.



Informed decisions are based on a candid and factual presentation of environmental impacts. These facts come from collecting information on the areas and resources affected by each of the alternatives. The analysis identifies the type and extent of potential impacts resulting from the alternatives and the degree to which these impacts affect the human environment. This information is made public in the Draft EIS/OEIS. Following public review, comments are considered and integrated into the Final EIS/OEIS and re-released for public review. The Secretary of the Navy then makes a determination on how to implement the proposed action based on the analysis.

Public Involvement in Shaping this Proposed Action is Important

It is the Navy's responsibility to keep communities informed and involved. The scoping meetings will give us the opportunity to talk with you about any issues you may have or alternatives you wish to suggest. Additionally, we will ask for community involvement at public hearings during the public comment period following publication of the Draft EIS/OEIS.

The official scoping period commenced with the Notice of Intent published in the Federal Register on September 11, 2003. Scoping meetings are being held to help Navy representatives identify issues, assist in defining the scope of analysis, as well as develop other reasonable alternatives. The public can provide input in two ways:



1. By submitting written comments at any time during the public scoping period, which lasts until December 5, 2003. Written comments can be sent via e-mail at RangeExtensionE@efanw.navfac.navy.mil, by visiting the web site at <http://www-keyport.kpt.nuwc.navy.mil>, or via regular mail to the following address:

Commander
Engineering Field Activity, Northwest
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
19917 7th Avenue NE
Poulsbo, WA 98370
Attn: Code 05EC3.KK (Mrs. Kimberly Kler)
2. By attending and providing oral or written comments at any one of the four public scoping meetings sponsored by the Navy.
 - Keyport – Monday, November 17 at the Naval Undersea Museum, 610 Dowell Street, Kitsap County
 - Belfair – Tuesday, November 18 at the Belfair Elementary School, Gymnasium, 22900 NE Highway 3, Mason County
 - Quilcene – Wednesday, November 19 at the Quilcene Public Schools, Multi-Purpose Room, 294715 Highway 101, Jefferson County
 - Hoquiam – Thursday, November 20 at the Hoquiam High School, Cafeteria, 501 West Emerson, Grays Harbor County

Thank you for your time and participation in this EIS/OEIS process for the extension of the ranges in NUWC Keyport's Northwest Range Complex!